

NOTES ON *TEBENNA BJERKANDRELLA*
(THUNBERG)

By R. J. HECKFORD*

Between 20th August and 4th September 1982 Mr. K. G. M. Bond (1983) found several specimens of *Tebenna bjerkandrella* (Thunberg) at Douglas, Cork: the first record for Ireland. During 5th and 6th September 1982 at Budleigh Salterton, Devon I found 13 tenanted cocoons of what I suspected might be *bjerkandrella*, on the underside of leaves of *Pulicaria dysenterica*. On 10th September I found four larvae and a similar cocoon on *Pulicaria* at Axmouth, Devon. The following day a *bjerkandrella* emerged from the cocoon from Axmouth.

From then until 24th October 1982 I recorded over fifty larvae, cocoons or vacated cocoons at the following places in Devon: Branscombe, Exmouth, Shaldon, Maidencombe, Brixham, Heybrook Bay and Plymouth. On 26th September 1982 I saw five larvae and one adult at Tregantle, Whitsand Bay, Cornwall. In each case the locality was on the coast and the foodplant was *Pulicaria*. I failed to find the species inland.

The larval feeding was conspicuous. Usually the larvae fed on the undersurface of a leaf, under a slight web in which the black frass collected. The uppersurface of the affected part of the leaf turned brown. Sometimes a larva spun the tips of two leaves together and fed on the uppersurface of the lower leaf. Usually there was only one larva to a leaf. The larvae preferred leaves about half-way up the stem on plants which still had green leaves all the way down the stem. They also preferred plants which were not growing close together.

I made a larval description as follows: head semi-transparent light brown: plate greenish with black speckles; body light green, gut darker green; pinacula black and anal plate transparent with black speckles. The pupation site was usually on the plant itself, either on the underside of a leaf where it joined the stem or on the stem. I could not find the pupation site when the larva did not pupate on the plant on which it had fed. The cocoon was spindle shaped and the pupa was extruded on emergence.

Meyrick (1928) gives "Kent to Dorset and Cambridge, local" and June and July for the larva. Accordingly I had assumed it was not uncommon and had been found before in the larval stage in Britain. Therefore I was very grateful to Mr. E. C. Pelham-Clinton for telling me that to the best of his knowledge the species had not been seen in Britain since 1947. As a result I have tried to discover the history of this species in this country, which I set out below. I could not trace any record of larvae being found and there

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are not many records of adults. The question is whether the larvae I found were the result of an immigration. I suspect that they were because in 1983 I searched without success for larvae in several places where I had found them in 1982.

Records

26.viii.1846. J. C. Dale took one specimen at Glanvilles Wootton, Dorset (Bankes, 1889; Dale, 1886).

11.ix.1853. Stainton (1855) under the name *Simaethis vibrana* Huebner states: "a specimen of this, taken September 11th, 1853 near Hurst, Sussex, is in the collection of Mr. Hemmings . . . This specimen was taken amongst *Inula dysenterica*. . ." This specimen is in the E. F. Studd collection at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, Devon. It has a label which reads "Holme Bush nr. Hurst. Sp. 11. 1853". It has another label with the words "Ex Coll. P. B. Mason".

The identity of Hurst and Holme Bush was a puzzle which Mr. Pelham-Clinton solved. The previous entry in Stainton referred to a species in the collection of Mr. Hemmings taken at "Holm Bush (*sic*), near Henfield, Sussex." There is a Holm bush (*sic*) Farm two miles south-west of Hurstpierpoint and south-east of Henfield. Therefore Hurst is undoubtedly Hurstpierpoint.

Stainton (1860) and Morris (1872) both record *bjerkandrella* from "Hurst, Sussex" without data. No doubt both refer to this record.

1857. Stainton (1855) in recording the above specimen also states: "Mr. S. Stevens has also a specimen taken near Arundel". Morris (1872) gives "Arundel". Goss & Fletcher (1905) state: "The late Mr. S. Stevens showed me a specimen that he had taken at Poling on *Inula* bloom, and I think stated that he had met with another at *Holmbush*". The E. F. Studd collection contains one specimen with an octagonal label which appears to read "S. S. Coling 1857" but the word "Coling" could be "Poling". It bears two other labels which read "Ex. Coll. Dr. Mason" and "S. Stevens. 1857". Poling is near Arundel. Therefore all these records probably refer to this one specimen.

?vi.1859. Stainton (1860) under the title "Rare British Species Captured in 1859" states: "Dr. Knaggs exhibited a specimen of this insect taken near Folkestone, at the end of June." This must be the specimen which Dr. Knaggs (1869) recorded as follows: "*Simaethis vibrana*. Ten years ago I took a fine specimen of this sparkling little gem on the Lower Sandgate Road. This was the fourth known British example, and I have not heard of any recent capture. It is said to affect *Inula dysenterica*." Goss & Bower (1908) give "Folkestone" as does Morris (1872). Meyrick (1895, 1928) gives Kent. These records may all be based on Dr. Knagg's specimen, which I cannot trace.

By 1860. More (1860) records this (under *Simaethis vibrana*) without details in an Isle of Wight list.

By 1872. Morris (1872) simply gives "York".

By 1878. Parfitt (1878) in listing the lepidoptera of Devon, states (under *Symaethis (sic) vibrana*): "In swarms sometimes in the autumn on the flower-heads of umbelliferae, flitting about in the most restless manner". Parfitt's records do not always seem reliable. His collection was presented to the Torquay Natural History Society in 1932 but unfortunately was destroyed by museum beetle by 1952 and no record was kept of the contents of the collection.

? 1889. Bolam (1931) states: "We took this first on Ord Common, near Berwick in 1889, where it was afterwards found to be not uncommon".

14.ix.1889. E. R. Banks (*loc. cit.*) captured one specimen at Corfe, Dorset which he recorded without locality, mentioning only the Isle of Purbeck. This specimen is in the British Museum (Natural History) and is labelled "Corfe 14.9.1889". This record is also given by Richardson (1913) (under the name *Simaethis vibrana*) who says: "a single specimen of this great rarity. . ."

By 1894. The National Museum of Wales has a specimen in the Griffith collection. It has no data label under it but there are two labels next to it which read: "Found (broken) among *Scintillulana* in lot 113 of Revnd H. Burney's Sale of 22.1.94. Mended by me. A. B. Farn" and "A. B. Farn Sale 1922".

By 1895. Meyrick (1895, 1928) gives Cambridge. Fryer & Edelsten (1938) repeat this, attributing the record to Meyrick. I have not been able to find further details.

By 1900. There are four specimens in the E. F. Studd collection without data except that one is labelled "Ex Coll. S. Stevens" and the others each have a similar label. In addition, of the remaining three, one has a label "E. Coll. Dr. Mason" and the other two each has the label "11.1905".

Stevens' collection was sold in 1900 in two parts. In the catalogue for 23rd April lot 69 reads: "*Bjerkandrella* 8, Fens". (Could this mean Cambridge? Not all eight could have been taken there, as one of the specimens must have been the one taken at Poling in 1857). Part of Mason's collection was sold on 28th November 1905. Lot 123 contained nine *bjerkandrella*. Studd's diary records that he bought lot 123 for 22/- "shared with Bower $\frac{1}{2}$ to him". Bower is B. A. Bower whose collection I believe went to Tring, but I cannot trace his specimens.

By 1919. The Whittle collection in the British Museum (Natural History) contains two specimens labelled "Ex. coll. Sidney Webb". Webb died in 1919.

13.viii.1922. Turner (1955) gives Haselbury Plucknett, Somerset with the year alone and recording the captor as A. R. Hayward.

Part of his collection is in the Coney collection at the City of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. It contains one specimen labelled "Somerset H. P. 13.08.1922 A. R. Hayward".

?ix.1922. W. Mansbridge took three specimens at Totland, Isle of Wight. These are in the W. Mansbridge/H. Michaelis collection at Manchester Museum and are labelled "I. of Wight/Totland/ix.1922/W.Mbge". Goater (1975) gives Totland without further data. I assume this record is based on these specimens.

By 1925. The National Museum of Wales has a specimen in the Griffith collection with two labels. One reads "Sir Wm. Temple Sale 1925". The other reads "Probably bought from Meek.? Foreign". Thus this is a doubtful British record.

29.vii.1930. A. F. Griffith (1931) took one specimen at Southwick, Sussex. This is in his collection at the National Museum of Wales.

15.vi.1936. J. M. Jaques took one specimen at Studland, Dorset. This is in his collection which is at Sharpitor, Salcombe, Devon. This is a National Trust property.

By 1939. The late Mr. W. Parkinson Curtis (d. 1968) prepared an unpublished list of the lepidoptera of Dorset. He included a record from A. R. Hayward (d. 1939) for South Perrott, with no data. As already mentioned, part of Hayward's collection is at Bristol Museum. Part (I do not know if it is the rest) is incorporated in Jaques' collection at Sharpitor. Neither part contains a specimen from South Perrott.

7.ix.1947. B. W. Weddell took two specimens at Portholland, Cornwall. These are in the Royal Scottish Museum.

10.ix.1947. J. M. Jaques took two specimens (both now at Sharpitor) which give the locality as East Portholland, Cornwall. I am grateful to Mr. B. W. Weddell who tells me that this is the same locality as his.

By 1952. Ford (1954) in his review of the *Glyphipterygidae* gives "Kent to Cornwall and Cambridge". I do not know if Ford is referring to Jaques' and Weddell's unpublished records, but if not I know of no other records from Cornwall.

I have traced three specimens without full data. One is in the Ford collection at the British Museum (Natural History). It is just labelled "Pembroke". The other two are in the Griffith collection at the National Museum of Wales. They are labelled "e don. Brit. Mus."

The only other information I have about specimens of *bjerkan-drella* is contained in auction catalogues, for the sale of the following collections:— (1) William Farren. Sale 19th November 1895. lot 306 "*bjerkan-drella*" 1. (2) C. E. Fry. Sale 9-10th March 1896. Lot 533 "*vibrana*, Warren's collection" 1. (3) J. B. Hodgkinson. Sale 22-23rd November 1897. Lot 455 "*vibrana*" 3; lot 456 "*vibrana*" 2.

(4) C. G. Barrett. Sale 3rd December 1907. Lot 56 "*vibrana*" 1.

I have not been able to trace these specimens nor any details of their capture.

Parasites

I bred the following parasites: *Oiorhinus pallipalpis* Wesmael; *Gelis* sp. (possibly *instabilis* (Forster)) and *Hypomicrogaster suffolciensis* (Morley). *O. pallipalpis* attacks only *Choreutidae* and is common. The *Gelis* sp. is abundant and polyphagous. *H. suffolciensis* is apparently rare. It has been bred from *Pyrausta aurata* (Scopoli) and *Oncocera obductella* (Zeller).

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ALSOPHILA AESCULARIA D. & S. (MARCH MOTH): HORSE CHESTNUT AS A MAJOR LARVAL PLANT. — At Dartford in late June 1980 I found a number of greenish, striped looper caterpillars among the leaves on twigs issuing from the tree trunks where branches had been removed, the leaves displaying a distinct ragged appearance. I was unable at first to identify the larvae, as were several other lepidopterists to whom they were shown. However, I noticed the caterpillars possessed a pair of rudimentary prolegs on the segment preceding the first pair of prolegs and that suggested they belonged to the small group of moths which includes *aescularia*. The three textbooks at my disposal, the standard works by E. Newman and R. South, and W. Stokoe's '*The Caterpillars of the British Moths*', all provided inadequate descriptions omitting mention of rudimentary prolegs, and the latter author misleadingly describes the larvae as being 'small', whereas they are large in relation to the size of the moth. The illustration in 'South' is poor, and that in 'Stokoe' quite ludicrous. However, reference to the excellent illustrations in W. Buckler's '*The Larvae of the British butterflies and moths*', solved the problem. In the locality referred to almost all of several dozen trees produced *aescularia* larvae, and horse chestnut would appear to be the main larval foodplant, although neither Chalmers-Hunt nor L. and K. Evans record *aescularia* from this tree in their local works on the lepidoptera of Kent and N. E. Surrey respectively — B. K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Bexley, Kent.